PROSPECTUS

OF THE

BENTINCK ARM AND FRASER RIVER

ROAD COMPANY,

LIMITED.

THIS COMPANY IS ORGANIZED UNDER THE JOINT STOCK COMPANY'S LIMITED LIABILITY ACT, 1860.

VICTORIA
Printed at the British Colonist Office
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PROSPECTUS.

THE object for which this Company has been organized is the construction of a Road, (either for mules or waggons) from the North Bentinck Arm, or some point on the Bellacoola River falling into the same on the North-west Coast of British Columbia, to a point on the Fraser River, at or near the mouth of Quesnelle or Swift River.

The nominal Capital of the Company is Sixty Thousand Dollars, divided into Two Hundred and Forty Shares, of Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars each. The Company having power to increase that amount to One Hundred and Twenty Thousand Dollars, provided at any future time it shall be deemed expedient to construct a Waggon Road over the Route.

Twenty-five per cent. of the amount subscribed will be called in at once, the balance being subject to call as the Company may require for the prosecution of the work.

The Government of British Columbia has granted to Mr. Ranald McDonald an agreement for a Charter, authorizing him to levy a toll of *One and a half Cents* per pound upon all goods transported over the Road, and a *half dollar* per head on all cattle, for the term of five years from the completion of seventy miles of the Road.

This agreement, which also provides for the conversion of the Trail into a Waggon-Road—in which event a new Charter will be granted, giving an increased rate of toll and an extension of time—has been assigned to the Company by the said Ranald McDonald.

By refcrence to the Report of Messrs. Barnston & McDonald, annexed to this Prospectus, it will be seen that a saving of *more than one third of Land Transportation* is obtained by this Route over the present road by Port Douglas, which is considered the best of those now in existence. On this account it will be easy for passengers to pass over the proposed Road to the terminus on the Fraser in *eight* days, while at least *fifteen* are consumed under the most favorable circumstances on all others. The saving in expense to passengers will be at least fifty dollars for the trip.

The Coast Route has an additional advantage over the others in this fact; on the Douglas Route it is necessary that goods shall be transhipped TEN times, besides which they pass through the hands of different traders, who all get a per centage from their sales; while, by the proposed road, traders in Cariboo will be enabled to supply themselves DIRECTLY from the Sea Coast, with but TWO trans-shipments.

The experience of 1861 has shown that the existing routes into the country are *totally* inadequate to the supply of the mining regions, therefore, (leaving aside the question of competition) this road must necessarily be

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patronized to a great extent to supply the demand of the present and ensuing years.

The North Bentinck Arm possesses an excellent harbor, of sufficient capacity to accommodate the largest fleets at all seasons of the year.

The country through which the road will pass presents few difficulties of construction, and is studded in every direction with open prairies, lakes, and extensive meadows, affording abundant feed for pack animals.

The town site of Bellacoola is admirably adapted for the formation of a Commercial Depot for the northern portion of British Columbia, being accessible by steamer from Victoria in *forty hours* at all seasons of the year.

The average freight for provisions hitherto, from the head of navigation on the Fraser to the Cariboo Mines, has not been less than forty (40) to fifty (50) cents. It is anticipated that over the proposed road an *immediate* reduction of at least fifteen cents per pound will take place, to be reduced in time still lower.

If we estimate the probable immigration into this country during the season at eight thousand persons, they will require a monthly supply of nine hundred tons of goods. Provided one half of this amount shall pass over the proposed road, the Toll during the six months which comprise the business season, will amount to eighty-one thousand dollars. This amount, therefore, less the costs of repairs and collection, will be the immediate return to the stockholders of the Company.

The expense of constructing a Mule Trail, as required by the Government, is estimated at a sum not exceeding Thirty-five Thousand dollars.

By reference to the rep[illegible]ompanying, a more distinct idea of all the various advantages to be [illegible]d by this route will be obtained.

Application for shares must be made at the office of Edward Green, Wharf Street, Victoria.

VICTORIA, VANCOUVER ISLAND, April 5th, 1862.

REPORT.

Victoria, V. I., January 1st, 1862.

EDWARD GREEN, ESQ.,

DEAR SIR:—

In compliance with your request we beg leave to submit the following remarks as a Report upon the proposed Road from the Bellacoola Inlet, or North Bentinck Arm, to the Northern Mines of British Columbia:

The road would be about two hundred miles long, that is to say, from the head of the Inlet to the point required on the Fraser River.

The present trails run the whole distance from the Fraser River to the Coast Range on an elevated table land, which is studded in every direction with small prairies, belts of timber, and lakes and meadows.

The food for animals is good and plentiful; the streams are numerous, but small and shallow, in fact, with one or two exceptions, being mere brooks. With the exception of a part of the descent through the Coast Range the trail is decidedly of a level character. This descent, or rather slide, is really the only obstruction, and could easily be overcome or avoided—a fact that must become evident to every one when informed that we passed and returned packed horses over it during our trip last summer.

From the place where the trail first strikes the Bellacoola River in the Coast Range (that is at the foot of the slide traveling from the interior to the coast) it runs along its bank the whole way to the head of the Inlet, through a deep gorge or pass in the mountains, which varies in width from half a mile to five miles.

As regards the practicability of the road all we need say is this—that at eight different times during the last summer parties consisting of two, three, or more persons, have been over the route.

All of these parties succeeded in getting through without difficulty, and agree with us in saying not only that a good practical Road, or Mule Trail, (that is to say, *ten* feet wide as required by Government) can be made at a comparatively small cost, but that when made, a very great saving in the cost of transportation will be effected.

There would be little difficulty, even now, in the present unimproved state of the Trail, in taking a train of horses or mules, lightly packed, from the Bellacoola Inlet to the Fraser River.

The Harbor is pronounced by seafaring men to be very safe and commodious.

The site for a town at the head of the Inlet is all that can be desired.

The facilities for building wharves, docks, &c., are of the very best kind.

The timber on the Bellacoola River, is superior, consisting principally of cedar, white spruce, and fir.

The fisheries are of some consequence, inasmuch as fish of many kinds, viz: cod, hallibut, salmon, oulachans, herring, &c., abound there, and will no doubt hereafter become the source of a profitable trade.

It is also known that there is copper in the vicinity.

Gold has also been discovered both on the Bellacoola and Chisikut Rivers, although it is uncertain whether it is in paying quantities.

This uncertainty arises from the fact that every one who has as yet been over the road went through more with the object of exploring and finding a shorter and cheaper route into the northern mines of British Columbia than with the view of prospecting.

The making of this Road would have the effect

of opening up large tracts of country fit for agriculture and pasturage, as well as of developing the resources of the whole Northwest Coast. Vessels trading to Bellacoola would in course of time obtain return cargoes of minerals, timber, coal, oil, fish and furs.

Bellacoola is only 200 miles to the eastward of the southern extremity of Queen Charlotte's Island, on which valuable copper mines have been discovered and are now being worked.

In order to show the advantages possessed by this Road over those now in existence, it will be necessary to make a comparison with one of them, say the Douglas and Lillooette Route, which at present is the favorite one. Taking Port Douglas as an equal starting point with Bellacoola they will compare in point of distance as follows:

Port Douglas to Lillooette,	108 miles.
Lillooet to Mouth of Quesnelle,	250 "
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Bellacoola to some point on the Fraser near the mouth of Quesnelle, say	200 miles.

Thus, leaving a gain of 158 miles on the total distance in favor of the proposed route.

Besides this gain in the distance, the detentions and transhipments are so numerous on the River Route that they have been a most serious cause of complaint to traders and passengers in and to the upper country, and what is more of great pecuniary loss. The transhipment of goods carried from Victoria to Cariboo *via* the Douglas route (by far the best) amount to no fewer than thirteen 13.) On the Coast route they will amount to no more than three (3), viz.:

1st, at Bellacoola;

2d, On reaching the Fraser;

3d, On the other side of the Fraser.

For the completion of the Bellacoola Route we consider that no more than $35,000 will be required. This route offers many and great advantages over all other routes for passengers, traders, and packers. Persons leaving Victoria, and going *via* Bellacoola, will be able to reach the Cariboo mines at the least seven days sooner, and at less cost, than if they had gone by the Fraser, whilst goods from Victoria can be landed in Cariboo from 10 to 15 days earlier than if forwarded by any of the present routes, which occupy at the very least 35 days. As soon as landed at Bellacoola neither goods nor passengers need be detained a single day.

Recent discoveries prove that the mines in British Columbia extend far beyond the Cariboo country, in a northwesterly direction; the further they extend in this direction the better for those interested in the proposed route.

It is almost needless for us to mention that with the exception of the Naas River this is the only route by which parties have been able to penetrate into the interior of British Columbia from the coast.

The Bute Inlet expeditions have all proved failures, none of them having been able to advance more than 60 miles from the coast.

Naas River is altogether too far north, and is also quite impracticable.

The opening of the proposed route and the building of a town at Bellacoola, would have the following effect upon the trade and commerce between Victoria and the Northern Mines of British Columbia:

The town of Bellacoola would become the depot for the supply of the Northern Mines, and would also be a starting point for pack trains.

On the River Routes there are no Depots at all. All the towns or stations being only calling or forwarding places. Neither New Westminster, Douglas, Yale, Hope, Lillooette, nor Lytton, are what are properly called commercial depots. The two latter places (the best of the lot) are mere starting points for pack trains.

Victoria is, as it always has been, the only Depot for British Columbia.

Bellacoola thus becoming a depot for merchandize, packers and traders from the Northern Mines could always supply themselves there from the original importers; whereas, by the other routes, they have to buy from the traders of the interior towns, after the goods have passed through many hands, and, of course, the expenses materially increased thereby.

Business houses would be established at Bellacoola. Goods would be bought there by traders and packers, carried over the route to Cariboo, and sold there by the very same men who had bought them at Bellacoola.

This system shows at a glance the great advantages that a house established at Bellacoola will possess, over and above any of those on the River Routes.

The proximity of the town of Bellacoola to the Cariboo would be of immense advantage to merchants in Victoria, inasmuch as by establishing branch houses or agencies at Bellacoola, they would be able to communicate more quickly with their purchasers, and also receive their return payments more speedily.

They would in fact, in this way, deal DIRECTLY with Cariboo traders.

Bellacoola would thus become a branch town of Victoria for the supply of the Northern Mines, and Victoria still be the depot for the river trade, and also the main depot for the coast trade.

The discovery of rich diggings extending far to the northward and westward of Cariboo is a powerful and convincing argument in favor of the opening of this route.

Supposing there should be a rush of miners to these new localities, it will actually be impossible to supply them with provisions by the present routes, except in a very limited manner, and at a fearfully exorbitant price.

It is difficult for us at present to give even an approximate estimate of the amount of goods likely to pass over the proposed road, but we have set down, as a moderate calculation, *four hundred and fifty tons per month*, and taking six months as the packing period, at the rate of one cent and a half per pound, we have a result of eighty-one thousand dollars ($81,000); from this deduct annual expenses for collections and repairs, say fifteen thousand dollars ($15,000), leaving a gain on the six months of sixty-six thousand dollars ($66,000).

Before concluding this report we may mention that it has also occurred to us that at some period not far distant a road will be made across the Continent, connecting the British Provinces of the Atlantic Coast with the Colonies on the Pacific. Such road there is every reason to believe will pass through the Red River and Saskatchewan country, and through the Rocky Mountains *via* Jasper's House, and Tête Jaune Câche; thence down the East branch of the Fraser to Fort George; thence, provided the Coast Route be opened, there is no doubt that it would go to the North Bentinck Arm. So that it appears to us probable enough that the future town of Bellacoola will yet be the terminus of the much talked-of Pacific Road through British Territory.

Trusting that these remarks will satisfy you that the proposed road from the Bellacoola Inlet (North Bentinck Arm) to the Fraser River is a perfectly feasible project, and will prove a remunerative enterprise, we remain, sir,

Your ob't. servants,

RANALD McDONALD,
JOHN G. BARNSTON.

APPENDIX TO REPORT.

COAST ROUTE TO THE NORTHERN MINES,

FROM

VICTORIA TO BENTINCK ARM, THENCE TO CARIBOO.

The following is the time of the "Labouchere," as given by Captain Swanson, and Mr. Elliott, the Chief Engineer; viz.,

Victoria to Nanaimo	7½ hours.
Nanaimo to Fort Rupert	20 "
Fort Rupert to Bentinck Arm	18 "
	Making 45½ hours.

The "Labouchere" does not average more than 9 knots at the outside, thus making the distance from Victoria to Bellacoola (Bentinck Arm) 410 miles.

The navigation presents no difficulties whatever; with the exception of 40 miles of passage after entering Queen Charlotte's Sound, a boat has shelter all the way from Victoria, and the entire trip can be made in two days.

A suitable boat ought to make three trips per month—say we take the first of the month;

1 to 2 days	taking in cargo at Victoria,
3 "	trip up to Bentinck Arm,
2 "	discharging at Bentinck Arm,
3 "	return trip.
10 days	—3 trips per month.

The above account tallies exactly with that given by Capt. Mitchell, who formerly ran up the Northwest Coast in all of the H. B. Co.'s steamers.

The distance across Bentinck Arm from the South to the North side is from 2 to 3 miles.

The depth from the entrance (King's Island) to the head of the Arm (the mouth of the Bellacoola River) is about 40 miles.

The harbor never freezes, and the freezing of the Bellacoola River would cause no impediment in the transportation of goods and passengers, whilst traffic on the Fraser River routes is stopped, and miners prevented

getting into Cariboo, even at this late season of the year, owing to the frozen state of the Lakes, which from all accounts may continue two or three weeks longer.

The temperature is no colder than at Victoria.

Taking the distance from Victoria to Bentinck Arm to be 410 miles,
Thence to the terminus on the Fraser (at the very most) .. 200 miles,

We have a distance of ..... 610 miles.

Victoria to Cariboo, by the Fraser River routes is .. .... 607 miles.

The distance by each route thus comes out about equal—but compare the advantages offered by the Coast Route :

A saving of time to passengers of ..... 12 days,
A saving of cost do do ..... $40 to $50,
A saving in time in transportation of goods .... 15 days,
A saving in cost of do do $300 per ton.

The Bellacoola Indians are of the most friendly kind, ready to give every assistance in packing over the road, and very anxious for the settlement of white men at the Bentinck Arm.

Pack trains can start from the Terminus on the Fraser two months earlier in the season than they can by the existing routes, to proceed to Cariboo.

COMPARISON:

Goods conveyed by the Fraser River Routes have never yet been placed in Cariboo under at the least ..... 35 days.

Goods by the Coast Route can be placed in the heart of the Cariboo region in 20 days, including all delays ;

Victoria to Bellacoola (at the most) ..... 3 days,
Bellacoola to Terminus on Fraser (at the most) 12 "
Thence to Cariboo (at the most) .... 5 " .. 20 days.

Showing a difference in favor of the Coast Route of 15 days.

The time required by the Express to arrive in the Cariboo from Victoria by the Fraser River Route is at least ..... 15 days.

The time by the Coast Route will be at the most 11 days, viz. :

Victoria to Bellacoola ..... 3 days,
Thence to Cariboo ..... 8 " ..... 11 days

Thus leaving a gain of four days going, ... 4 days
and four days returning, equal to ..... 8 days
in favor of the Coast Route.

VICTORIA, V. I., April 15, 1862.

COLONIST PRINT.